

subjects at a young age. Under the excellent tutelage of coordinators Ms. Sunshine McFaul and Mr. Jayson Leslie, students discover the value of math and science in their lives. I also want to thank and commend NYSP's national director Dr. Gale Wiedow for his terrific leadership of these 200 programs throughout our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, these two fine programs in my home district in western Wisconsin are indicative of the quality of NYSP as a whole; and I am thankful for the dedicated staff and volunteers that make it happen. Unfortunately, the President proposed to eliminate NYSP program funding in the next fiscal year's budget. Fortunately, however, NYSP has enjoyed wide bipartisan support in Congress.

I also want to thank my good friend and colleague from Buffalo, New York (Mr. QUINN) for cochairing the National Youth Sports Program with me in recent years. He has been a terrific advocate of youth generally and of NYSP specifically. I appreciate his hard work in going to bat for this program. He will be sorely missed in this Chamber, and we all wish him a happy retirement.

Tonight I stand with thousands of children to thank the Committee on Appropriations for fully funding NYSP, and I urge my colleagues to remember the value of athletics and academics in our children's lives and the important role NYSP plays in delivering both during the summer months.

Mr. Speaker, the legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers, Vince Lombardi, once famously said, "Once you learn to quit, it becomes a habit." The National Youth Sports Program teaches children not to quit, and it is our responsibility not to quit on them.

OIL-FOR-FOOD PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MCCOTTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCOTTER. First, just a couple of minor observations on the debate so far tonight. We heard earlier the gentleman from Oregon mention that the Pentagon on three separate occasions believed that they could strike and eliminate a terrorist who was a threat to the United States. I would just caution the gentleman to be very careful lest he be considered as advocating a preemptive unilateral act of war against a resident alien in his sovereign host country.

Also, on the previous mentioning of plans, whether real or not, that explored potentially delaying the election, I, too, would just like to say that I would oppose any plan to delay an American election. But I also think that it is important to remember that in the 1864 election Abraham Lincoln did not spend a lot of time personally campaigning to win the votes of southern voters, as my understanding is that those people chose not to participate in

that election. The distinction which is critical would be, then, that while the southern States in rebellion chose not to participate in the Presidential election, there may be many Americans who, through an act of terror, may be precluded against their will from participating in an American election.

So if we are done with the rhetorical flourishes of partisanship, perhaps there would be some who would like to explore a responsible policy approach and instead think of if an urban center, which are primarily the targets of the terrorists, would be attacked, we do not suspend the date of the election but perhaps the election could be extended until those people could be given their American constitutional right to vote in that election. I say that as a Republican knowing full well that my party does not do well in large urban areas, but I say that as an American respecting the rights of my fellow citizens to be able to participate in the choosing of their national leadership.

On to the point that I wish to talk about. Mr. Speaker, in addition to playing host to the United Nations, United States taxpayers provide 22 percent of the United Nations' core funding. It is not, therefore, inhospitable nor unwarranted for U.S. taxpayers to demand a full and fair accounting of the U.N.'s \$111 billion Oil-for-Food Program, especially when, as revealed in a May 6 article by Hudson Institute Fellow Claudia Rosett, the U.S. Treasury Department has designated one of the Oil-for-Food contractors as a front group for senior officials of the Saddam Hussein regime.

Initial reports estimate over \$10 billion has been stolen, misplaced and/or skimmed from this program that was designed to help the Iraqi people. Combined with the aforementioned front group/contractor, we may well have witnessed a U.N.-administered relief program result in food being torn from the mouths of victimized Iraqis and placed in the pockets of Saddam's executioners and their contemptible, utterly corrupt international co-conspirators.

We in the world demand and deserve answers, Mr. Speaker, and yet we have been met by a stone wall of resistance and a wealth of stealth on the part of the United Nations. Excuses abound for the cover-up, the two most noticeable being that it is an institutional response. I am sure that they culled that from the old records of Tammany Hall. They also say that they will not release any of the 55 internal audits because of the, quote, sensitivity of member states. I think that the sensitivities of member states like the United States and the United States Congress which have repeatedly asked for these documents should be accorded as much as the purported sensitivity of states who may have something to hide.

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If they do in fact have nothing to hide, if the intimidating letters to con-

tractors and the untendered records to Congress may be belied, then to save its last lingering endangered chard of integrity, General Secretary Kofi Annan, with the stroke of a pen, can release all the requisite oil for food documents and shed transparency and truth upon this abominable fraud. And while the U.S. taxpayers might not hold our breath until he complies, we U.S. taxpayers must withhold our funding from the United Nations until he does.

SUPPORT AMERICA'S TROOPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GINGREY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, in families there are always very special occasions. Before I enter into my special order this evening, I wish to announce that in our family we have had a wonderful addition this past Saturday afternoon, July 10. Abigail Anding Skelton was born over here in Maryland. She is absolutely a gorgeous young lady, and we are very happy for her, her wonderful parents, her cousins and aunts and uncles, as well as grandparents.

Mr. Speaker, as Americans review the facts and decide whether it was prudent and necessary for the President to send American troops to invade Iraq, let me remind my colleagues and the citizens across our country that it is possible to respectfully disagree with the President and still strongly support our troops.

I believe that all House Democrats support our men and women in uniform and are committed to ensuring that they have the tools they need to succeed in Iraq and Afghanistan, wherever they may be serving in the defense of our country.

Over 466,000 service members are currently deployed to 120 countries around the world, and nearly half of those are serving and doing so in dangerous and often deadly conditions in the Middle East. While the majority of the troops deployed are on active duty, nearly 30 percent are citizen-soldiers from the National Guard, as well as the Reserve, who volunteered to serve our Nation. These men and women have volunteered to leave behind their families, their loved ones, jobs and communities to defend the freedoms that we hold so dear.

Over 150,000 Reservists and National Guardsmen are currently deployed, which is nearly 18 percent of the total Reserve force. Since September 11, over 215,600 Reservists and Guardsmen have served their Nation both at home and abroad. Not since the first Persian Gulf War have so many served under such arduous conditions for so long.

While 18 percent may not seem very high, let me put it in a bit different perspective. Over 40 percent of the

Army National Guard has been mobilized and close to 46 percent of the Army Reserve has been called to active duty. The Marine Corps Reserve has seen 61 percent of its forces back in uniform full-time. Let me tell you that the Coast Guard Reserve has tapped nearly all of its Reservists; 99 percent have been recalled to active duty.

Why is it important that so many of our citizen-soldiers have been activated? Because I want people to know that our Nation has been committed to military action that is taxing both active duty and Reserve troops to the limit.

This is not just my personal opinion. General Richard Cody, the Army's Vice Chief of Staff, last week testified before the Committee on Armed Services, and I said, "Are we stretched thin with our active and Reserve component forces right now?"

"Absolutely." Those are the words of General Cody.

Beyond General Cody, I want to relate a personal story. I recently spoke with the spouse of an activated National Guardsman. She described how her husband was still in Iraq and had been extended beyond one year per the agreement when he was called. She flat stated to me that at the end of his enlistment, he was going to get out of the military.

Mr. Speaker, we simply cannot afford to lose these good people from our military, and I worry about the nature and extent of our commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan and what they will cause our service members to do, maybe leave and cause others not to reenlist.

We have the finest military in history, we really do, and we simply cannot afford to squander it. Now we have recently learned that the Army is deploying to Iraq the opposition forces from the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, and the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

What makes the deployment of these forces particularly alarming is these are the troops that train our everyday forces that are getting ready to deploy to Iraq. We are deploying the trainers, a measure of last resort. That shows just how much we have stretched our forces to the limit.

More importantly, I worry about the consequences. The troops that we send in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan may not have the training they need to succeed and to survive.

Mr. Speaker, as many in this House know, I have been advocating an end strength increase, more troops, particularly for the Army, since 1995, when our committee first received testimony that the Army could use an additional 40,000 troops. What troubles me is that the administration continues to oppose an increase in the end strength for the Army and the Marine Corps.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, both the House and the Senate defense author-

ization bills include provisions for additional end strength, and I am committed to a conference outcome that makes this a reality. I know that other Democrats on the committee share this goal with me.

Just 3 years ago, the President addressed the soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Georgia. He told them that they were overdeployed and needed more support. Since then, the members of the 3rd Infantry Division have been deployed to Kuwait for training exercises for nearly a year, only to be extended for the war in Iraq. After spending nearly a year in the desert, they came back to Fort Stewart, only to undergo a significant structural transformation. Recently members of the 3rd Infantry learned that they will be returning to Iraq for perhaps another year's deployment.

If the 3rd Infantry Division was already overdeployed in 2001, how can we honestly look these men and women in the eye and ask them to continue these levels of deployment, with no help in sight? To do so risks breaking faith with our troops and destroying the world's finest Army. That is not the way that a Nation should treat its troops or the families.

The increased operational demands in the military are clear. They will continue for some time in the future. In fact, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz recently told our committee that we could have a substantial military presence in Iraq for years. Assuming he is right, we need to do something now to make sure that our operational commitments do not overstretch our military to the breaking point.

What I think we should do is support our troops by ensuring that we have the additional manpower necessary to carry out the missions we ask of them. This is one way we can show support for our troops and recognize the sacrifices that they have made in the war on terrorism. I am personally committed to seeing that we have enough troops to do the job that our country asks of them.

I now yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) for comments she might make.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member of the House Committee on Armed Services for taking this hour to discuss what Democrats in particular have been doing for our troops.

The gentleman was so good in outlining the fact that our troops are now in over 120 countries in the world. We have about 161,000 troops deployed in Iraq and Kuwait. Almost 40 percent of those are Reservists and National Guardsmen. The fact of the matter is there has been stop-loss in these troops, which means that somebody who is ready to go out and has indicated that they are leaving the Armed Services are stopped from leaving because we need them to continue to serve.

Just recently, about 10 days ago, this administration said that it would call in the Individual Ready Reserve. Those are people who have already gotten out and are into their full-time lives and now are asked to continue back in.

So we really are at the risk of breaking the force. Too many tours, our families are hurting, they do not see their loved ones. Especially if you are a National Guardsman or Reservist and you have got your regular life going on, and all of a sudden you are plucked up and sent somewhere 6 months, then it turns into 12 months, then 18 months, and your family suffers because you may not get the same paycheck that you did in civilian life.

I know that Democrats on the committee, one of the things we have been doing something to try to make up that gap, so financially speaking, our families are made whole. Unfortunately, that is not included in this bill that goes to conference.

One thing that is included, however, is more troops to be trained for the future. We have 30,000 new positions that we have put into the bill for the Army and 10,000 new positions for the Marines. But, again, it takes time. That is over 3 years. It takes time to train these new members of the force to go and help us do the work that we have asked them to do.

There are so many things that we have actually done. Initially when we deployed into Iraq, not everybody had body armor, for example. I know in my own area, in Costa Mesa, California, we have one of the premier companies that makes ceramic armor, and we are working three shifts, seven days a week in the factory to try to get the armor to our people out in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I guess the last thing I would like to say is that our families, the families of the military, are hurting. I have been able now to go over to Korea and to Afghanistan and to Iraq and to Germany to see our families, and they ask, for how long? How much? Why do you bring my family member and take him back 2 weeks later? How long will he serve there? How long will she serve there? Why do you put them in Iraq for 6 months, and then tell them it is another 4 months, and pretty soon it is a year, and then you bring them back and you put them into Afghanistan.

So one of the things we are trying to do is make sure that the Pentagon and this administration makes better schedules, begins to plan better for our troops and for our families.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take the time to thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for taking this time.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN).

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Missouri for organizing this special order and for yielding. I appreciate his leadership on the Committee on

Armed Services, and I am certainly proud to serve with him on that distinguished committee.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues to express our support and appreciation for our men and women in uniform who are doing an amazing job in Iraq, Afghanistan and throughout the world. The House Committee on Armed Services and this Congress have stood squarely behind them in their efforts and have endeavored to provide them with the resources and equipment they need to continue to be successful in the global war on terrorism.

As we travel through our districts, we encounter countless stories of appreciation of our men and women in uniform. However, their service often entails sacrifice. We hear from the families who spend extended periods of time away from their loved ones and often experience financial difficulties. We hear from employers who agree to rehire employees upon their return, but who struggle to fill the gaps until then.

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We hear from representatives of our cities and towns who note that many of their first responders have been called up as part of the National Guard and Reserve. Our troops and all those in their lives are willing to make sacrifices for the defense of our Nation, but we must do our share to ease the burden wherever we can.

Last week, the Committee on Armed Services held a hearing on the next force rotation plans for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. I am concerned that in an effort to meet needed troop levels, we will be employing strategies that will have adverse effects on our military in the long term. For example, despite widespread agreement that our National Guard and Reserve are shouldering a significant portion of the effort, we will actually be increasing their participation rates in the third rotation of Operation Iraqi Freedom to 43 percent of total forces, as compared to 25 percent in the initial deployments. Additionally, we are also calling up 5,600 members of the Individual Ready Reserve whose areas of expertise are sorely needed in Iraq.

I am concerned that such efforts, while allowing us to meet the needs of the coming year, will ultimately harm our military through lower recruiting and retention rates, particularly among the Guard and Reserve. The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) has led the charge for an increase in end-strength of our Armed Forces, and I look forward to working with him and the administration toward this vital goal.

At this time I would like to pay a special tribute to all of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Rhode Island has mourned the loss of seven troops in Operation Iraqi Freedom, most recently Lance Corporal John J. Van Gyzen, IV, a brave

Marine who served with dignity and honor. I join his family and the people of Rhode Island in mourning this great loss.

On Monday, July 5, Lance Corporal Van Gyzen was killed by enemy fire during combat operations in the Al Anbar province of Iraq. Raised in Foster and West Warwick, Rhode Island, he later moved to Massachusetts and graduated from Dighton-Rehoboth High School in 2001, where he was a member of the track and field team. He followed in the footsteps of his grandfather, who served in the Navy in World War II, and enlisted in the Marines in October 2001. After completing boot camp at Parris Island, he joined K Company, Third Battalion, seventh Marine Regiment, as a rifleman. Those who knew him well recalled his sense of humor, his love of the outdoors, and his dedication to his family. I extend my deepest condolences to his parents, John and Dorothy; his stepmother, Jane; and his sisters, Bethany, Jessica, and Angel.

His loss causes us all to reflect on the bravery demonstrated by our men and women in uniform as they carry out their obligations in the face of great danger. When their Nation called them to duty to preserve freedom, liberty, and the security of their neighbors, they answered without hesitation. We remember those who have fallen, not only as soldiers but also as patriots who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. May we keep them and their loved ones in our thoughts and prayers as they struggle to endure this difficult period and mourn the heroes America has lost.

Finally, let us all continue to hope for the safe return of all of our troops serving throughout the world and remember how truly fortunate and grateful we are for their service.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Rhode Island, the distinguished gentleman, a member of the Committee on Armed Services, for his remarks.

I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK).

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. It is such an honor to be here on the floor once again with the great men and women of the Committee on Armed Services to get an opportunity to address the United States House of Representatives and also the American people.

First of all, I would like to say that I am both proud and humbled by what our troops have been able to accomplish under the circumstances. I also think that it is in proper order for us to give them uplift in a time that this very Congress, the other body, released a report, intelligence report showing that the intelligence, that there is a very strong possibility that it was manipulated, manipulated to the point that many Members of this House, many Members of the other body, and the public, were led to believe that the

circumstances were imminent as it relates to the threat to the United States of America, and that we had to forthwith go to war in Iraq with a preemptive strike.

I also think that the troops need uplift of the fact that the report, through the Department of Defense, said 25 percent of American lives could have been saved if we were prepared; not the troops, but this administration, with body Army and up-armor for their Humvees and vehicles.

I think they also need uplift to know that Democrats and some Republicans in this House are fighting for hearings to make sure that we have some level of accountability at the highest levels of the Defense Department and the administration, because we have men and women that have sacrificed not only their lives, but also many have sacrificed their freedom to be with their families.

I do not blame it on the troops, and I would not say that it is the troops' responsibility or fault about what is going on with the insurgency right now in Iraq. The troops will fight for 20 years if this country needs them to fight for 20 years. I think the bigger question comes down to in this democracy that we have, since we are traveling throughout the world trying to create new democracies and trying to create civilized governments, that there has to be some checks and balances, and it does not serve me any pleasure to say that right now in this effort in Iraq, I do not think the checks and balances are there.

I am glad that we were leader enough to come to the floor tonight to be able to share with the American people that we want our troops to know that there are Members of the Congress who will ask the "yes, but" question, that will ask the tough questions about equipment, that will ask the tough questions about intelligence and the fact that something happened between the CIA, what the Congress was told, and the role that the Bush administration played in it. This is not in any way being partisan; it is just laying the facts out the way we see them.

We also want the troops to know and their families to know that we want the situation to get to the point to where other countries will assist in Iraq, will assist in Afghanistan, and operations can get better, so hopefully Reservists and National Guardsmen that put their name on the dotted line, said they were willing to serve their country, that they will be able to come home in the very near future to be able to make a son or daughter's birthday, or to be able to see their families or loved ones or significant others.

Mr. Speaker, I think also it is very important for us to share with troop families that those of us in the Congress, I believe everyone in the Congress, that we feel for those wives and husbands and children when they are getting up to go to school in the morning, when they are getting ready to

now, this summer, to go to summer camp, and it goes over the TV. I have families in my district, they turn the TV off. I have one constituent who has two sons in the theater right now in Iraq, and they do not even watch the TV in the morning because they do not want to start the day off knowing that two or five or six troops were killed overnight, and they do not know if someone in a military uniform is going to knock on their door and tell them that it was their son, her son. I would say that there are Americans that cringe when they hear that, because it is quite personal.

So I want to say to those families that we appreciate their service. I want to say to those families that we will get to the bottom and the top of bad intelligence. We will make sure that our troops have what they need to have. But we need the opportunity to do so.

I implore, Mr. Speaker, as I close, the Republican leadership within our committee, the Republican leadership in this House, to allow the House Committee on Armed Services to do its work, to be able to have the witnesses that we need to have to ask the tough questions, to be able to know how much this effort in Iraq and also the lack of effort as it relates to, we just had a hearing on Afghanistan and the poppy plants being harvested earlier that is funding the Taliban to fight against our American troops, and it is the number one threat to this country and did have a connection to 9/11; asking those tough questions to people that had made the decision, not someone five tiers down within the Department of Defense, but at the very top of the Department of Defense, because the country's reputation is on the line.

Every veteran that suited up and went into war, need it be World War II, Korea, the Gulf War I, need it be when individuals went into theater in Granada, anytime that we got ourselves together in Vietnam, making sure that those veterans know that the rest of the world, we appreciate their service and that we will not allow individuals, because they want to make sure that other individuals do not take fault for what has taken place thus far with bad intelligence, going to war, not for the reasons why the country was told, and also losing so many lives in that process.

So I am proud that we are here. I hope that we can come to the floor even more. I hope that the American people understand that there are Members on this. And I do not want to even put partisanship on this, because I know that there are Republicans who feel the way that we feel on this floor, and we want to make sure that those voices rise to the top. For those individuals who may be standing in the door of oversight by this Congress, I hope that they do not take personally our quest and our need to be able to address some of the issues that are facing the needs of our troops in theater.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the gentleman from Florida. I might add that that is our job, the Committee on Armed Services and Congress, to have oversight of the military of the United States, to ask the tough questions, because we are the ones that give them the training, the education, the equipment, the materiel. That is what we do. If we do not ask the good, tough, honest, hard-hitting questions that come up from time to time, we are not doing our job.

So I thank the gentleman for raising that issue. It is not a partisan matter; it is a matter of constitutional duty that we ask questions and learn so we can be of even more help to those in uniform.

Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in yielding to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT).

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I further thank him for scheduling this Special Order.

Mr. Speaker, our Armed Forces won an impressive victory in Iraq, but the Pentagon was poorly prepared for the aftermath. Three big assumptions proved wrong: one, that the Iraqi people would welcome us as liberators; two, that oil would soon pay for Iraq's rebuilding; and, three, that we have plenty of troops, weapons, and equipment for the postwar situation.

American troops were left to tackle tasks that they were not trained to handle, but let me tell my colleagues, they rose to the challenge. While the situation is still ours to win or lose, it would be far, far worse if it were not for their can-do attitudes and their courage. They are doing their best and have been doing their best to stabilize a God-forsaken country and put Iraq back in working order, and they are doing it under extremely difficult circumstances with all too little credit or attention given to their successes.

No one in the Bush administration thought that now, nearly 14 months after the end of major hostilities in Iraq, that we would have 161,600 U.S. troops deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom, 130,800 in Iraq, and 21,800 in Kuwait. We are about to embark on the third rotation of troops for the war in Iraq, which so far has involved the movement of 277,000 troops. Currently, Guardsmen and Reservists account for 40 percent of the Iraqi Freedom force; and following the upcoming rotation, the Reserve component will make up 43 percent. These are men and women who leave their jobs and businesses, their farms, not to mention their families, and serve tours longer than any of them ever expected.

In the first Persian Gulf War, the question was whether the total force would work, whether active and Reserve forces could fight and maneuver side by side. In this war, there is no question. Without the Guard and Reserve, our active duty troops could hardly deploy.

Whether active duty or Reserve, our troops face a daunting challenge. Secu-

rity in Iraq is so bad that thousands of troops unfortunately, but probably, will have to stay for a long time to come to prevent this country from falling into a fractious, bloody civil war.

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How did this happen? Poor assumptions, poor vision, poor planning. Ignoring State Department warnings, the Iraqi army was disbanded in May of 2003. With no other security forces on hand, U.S. military was left to confront, almost alone, an Iraqi insurgency and a crime rate that grew worse throughout the year, waged in part by soldiers of the disbanded army and in part by criminals who were released from prison.

The Army's Chief of Staff, Eric Shinseki, warned us that several hundred thousand troops would be needed to police post-war Iraq. What did he base that upon? Firsthand experience as the commander in chief of our multilateral force in Bosnia and Kosovo, several hundred thousand troops. Pentagon officials dismissed it the next day as wildly off the mark, fixing the figure closer to a hundred thousand. General Shinseki has been vindicated by what has happened.

Last August, our troops began training a new Iraqi army, a light infantry force of about 40,000 to be ready by this October, 2004. As of today, 7,000 to 9,000 have been trained, and when these troops are trained, it will still be far, far short of what is needed to maintain Iraqi security.

The situation in Iraq, unfortunately, differs dramatically from the rosy picture that was painted for us by expatriates before the war. During an interview with Meet the Press March 16, 2003, our Vice President, Mr. CHENEY, insisted that our troops would be welcomed as liberators. When asked what if we are viewed as conquerors instead, he said, "Well, I don't think it's likely to unfold that way, because I really do believe that we will be greeted as liberators."

What was his source? Well, he said, "I've talked with a lot of Iraqis in the last several months myself, had them over to the White House." While some Iraqis did greet our troops as liberators with open arms, many did not, and aliens like Abu Musab Zarqawi took advantage of open borders and infiltrated Iraq to begin waging guerilla war.

Since the Pentagon underestimated the number of troops required after the end of hostilities, we were not prepared to prevent looting or to guard hundreds of weapons dumps spread throughout the country. So the looting destroyed key components of the Iraqi infrastructure, and stolen munitions are being used today in attacks on coalition troops and Iraqi civilians.

Because this violence was not anticipated, thousands of troops were sent to Iraq without adequate body armor and without up-armored vehicles. They were to be greeted as liberators, but, in

Iraq, 882 have been killed so far, and 5,394 have been wounded. In Afghanistan, meanwhile, 130 have been killed, 332 have been wounded.

Our troops are the best-trained, the best-equipped, the best professionals, the finest fighting force the world has ever seen. More than 300,000 of them have served in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and over 40,000 have taken part in the conflict in Afghanistan, and despite blunders from above, the can-do determination of our men and our women in uniform never ceases to amaze me.

I traveled to Iraq late last summer, and I met with the Coalition Provisional Authority, with the Iraqi Governing Council, with U.S. commanders and with our troops. North of Baghdad in Mosul, the 101st Airborne Division was in charge. Its able commander, General Petraeus, calls this region the most viable region in Iraq, and he never missed a chance to salute his own troops.

He told us privately, "I've seen our young soldiers endure tremendous hardship, overcome huge challenges, fight a tenacious, determined and even suicidal enemy, and demonstrate incredible innovativeness and compassion. It's just extraordinary," General Petraeus said.

The first 30 days of an occupation, everybody knows, are critical. General Petraeus spent the first 30 days training local security forces, fueling the economy by use of his commander's funds to create local jobs and to befriend Iraqis. In the 101st, troops were often dual-hatted as warfighters and peacekeepers, carrying a rifle in one hand and a wrench in the other, putting down insurgency on one front and winning hearts and minds on the other.

Let me give you another snapshot. Consider the 1st Infantry Division. Soldiers from the 1st Division delivered medical supplies, textbooks and journals to the Tikrit Hospital, the hometown of Saddam Hussein, and Tikrit University Medical School in particular. They delivered 150 boxes of textbooks donated by medical schools and medical students in the United States.

Prior to this restocking, the university has had to use photocopies from medical students and medical texts. Our contribution raised the library at that school to 50,000 volumes.

Another snapshot. Let me read a portion of an article by James Lacey, and I read it because there has been so much copy devoted to what is going wrong there, so much copy about the violence there and about the hopelessness of the situation, we really do need to look from time to time at the success stories and at the remarkable and aspiring examples of our troops.

Here is what Lacey, who was embedded with the 101st Airborne Division, wrote. "Bravery inspires men, but brains and quick thinking win wars. In one particularly tense moment, a company of U.S. soldiers were preparing to

guard the Mosque of Ali, one of the most sacred Muslim sites, when agitators in what had been a friendly crowd started shouting that they were going to storm the mosque. In an instant, the Iraqis began to chant and a riot seemed imminent. A couple of nervous soldiers slid their weapons into fire mode, and I thought we were only moments away from a slaughter. These soldiers had just fought an all-night battle. They were exhausted, tense, and prepared to crush any riot with violence of their own. But they were also professionals, and so when their battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Hughes, ordered them to take a knee, point their weapons to the ground and start smiling, that is exactly what they did. Calm returned. By placing his men in the most nonthreatening posture possible, Hughes had sapped the crowd of its aggression. Quick thinking and iron discipline reversed an ugly situation and averted disaster."

Since then, Lacey writes, I have often wondered how we created an army of men who could fight with ruthless savagery all night and then respond so easily to an order to smile and relax your weapons.

Mr. Speaker, pride in our troops is not a partisan issue. Democrats and Republicans alike support our military personnel. For our troops, this is tough, dangerous duty. And though morale is satisfactory, as General Cody acknowledged in the New York Times just a week ago, the Army, among others, because they are doing most of the heavy lifting now, is absolutely stretched thin. That is why when the supplemental providing \$87 billion for Iraq and Afghanistan came before Congress, I proposed a package for the troops. Surely we could find a niche somewhere in an \$87 supplemental for the troops and their families.

I proposed that we increase imminent danger pay, separation pay, that we give them R&R tickets that would take them all the way home and not to their last duty base. I proposed extra funding for family assistance, because it is grossly underfunded.

I am sorry to say it, but the Republican leaders of the House would not let my package be offered on the House floor. Parts of it, fortunately, ended up in the conference report.

In May, when we had the defense authorization bill before us, I offered another amendment to that bill to ensure that every sailor, every soldier, every airman and marine in the combat zone has \$250,000 minimum life insurance paid for by the government itself and to fund several force protection measures, including the test and evaluation of new technologies that would neutralize these horrible devices called improvised electronic devices, roadside bombs, that have killed and maimed so many, I offered some money to boost that particular research. Once again, my amendment was not even made in order to be debated, at least debated on the House floor.

As costs mount, in lives and dollars, it is natural to second guess, but one lesson I hope we have learned is that the U.S. cannot go it alone in a policy that leaves American troops taking all the risk and American taxpayers paying all of the costs.

Our country, the United States of America, may be the world's largest economy and the world's only superpower, but we stretch ourselves dangerously thin by taking on commitments like Iraq with only a motley band of allies to share the burden.

The cost of the first Gulf War came to \$80 billion in today's money. Our allies picked up \$60 billion through cash contributions. \$16 billion was provided us in kind, petroleum and food and other things, mainly by Persian Gulf countries. That left us \$4 billion out of pocket for an \$80 billion war. This war so far has cost us \$125 billion and counting, because largely we decided to do it on our own, with only the United Kingdom as a paying, fully participating partner.

I may disagree with the administration over aspects of this war, and particularly going it alone, not building a broad-based coalition to support whatever we have done, but I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, in closing, that I stand second to none in supporting our troops.

Because of that and because I recognize how stretched we are, I am all for an increase in Army end strength of at least 30,000 and in Marine end strength at least by 9,000.

But, you know, Mr. Chairman, the test of our support is not what we see but whether or not we pass legislation that backs up what we say, that gives our troops the tools they need to execute their mission successfully and gives their families the resources they need to have peace of mind and security. We owe them no less, for they make this country the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me thank the gentleman from South Carolina for his excellent contribution today, as well as his outstanding contributions in the committee. We are the grandest civilization ever known in the history of mankind. As the gentleman from South Carolina just mentioned, we are the best. We have the finest military, strongest economy, and all of us at this time should realize what we really need to have for success in this war, this guerrilla warfare in Iraq and the war against terrorism in Afghanistan.

To begin with, we need additional troops. We must do our very best to make sure they have the equipment and the training and the munitions, but, more than that, we must let them know we support them with our words as well as with the deeds that we do here in Congress. And I would be remiss if I did not say that we should also say a special word of thanks to those wonderful families who support them, who are here at home hoping to

hear from their loved one in Iraq or Afghanistan and praying for them every day.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I say thank you to those who are in uniform today who are supporting this country in the most difficult way and especially to their families and all of the great love and support that they have.

OIL-FOR-FOOD PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would just introduce our remarks by saying I do not think I have done a special order this entire session, but I am doing one tonight because I feel very strongly about an issue, and that is the Oil-for-Food Program. And my subcommittee is working, as is the Committee on International Relations, on the whole issue of oil for food and the outrageous rip-off, probably the biggest rip-off in the history of rip-offs, the \$10 billion plus events over the course of many years that Saddam was involved in.

At this time I would like to recognize the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for whatever time he would like to consume.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding and join him in this very strong concern about one of the biggest scandals known in history and thank him for his good work as chairman of the subcommittee in trying to get to the truth as to what happened.

□ 2045

Mr. Speaker, tonight, we are discussing the recent disclosures about problems with the U.N.'s Oil-for-Food program. As my colleagues know, in 1995 the U.S. worked with the U.N. to create a program to allow Saddam Hussein to sell his country's oil in what was purported to be a controlled manner in return for shipments of humanitarian goods for the Iraqi people. Tragically, we now know that this noble effort was grotesquely undermined by scandal. The GAO estimates that some \$10 billion in oil revenue was stolen from the people of Iraq.

The laudable purpose of the Oil-for-Food program was to alleviate massive human suffering by innocent Iraqi civilians whom Saddam Hussein was deliberately starving in order to generate international support and sympathy for lifting U.N. Security Council sanctions against Iraq. The system to be implemented by the U.N. and by member states was supposed to carefully monitor all sales of oil and make sure that these petrol dollars were placed in a trust fund at the French Bank, the PNB-Paribas.

The system was supposed to be transparent. It was supposed to be above

board. It was supposed to be open, but it was anything but. As the coverup and the lack of transparency crippled efforts that continue to this day, efforts to establish all of the facts and to hold the corrupt to account.

New York Times columnist William Safire noted in June of 2004 that there are some 5,000 Oil-for-Food file folders stored at BNP-Paribas storage facilities in New York and in my home State of New Jersey with documentation on the letters of credit, the notice of arrival documents, descriptions of the contracts; and yet the U.S. investigators are not being allowed access to these vital documents.

In theory, Mr. Speaker, the trust funds were supposed to be out of the Hussein regime's control and were to be used to purchase civilian consumer goods and basic infrastructure. The justified fear manifested in the 1990s by the United States and the United Kingdom was that Hussein's agents would try to misuse oil funds to purchase banned weaponry and luxury items for the regime. History has proven these fears to be well founded. Unfortunately, the United Nations apparently presided over a system that was rife with loopholes and opportunities for Hussein and his thugs to corrupt and bribe their way towards enrichment at the expense of the very people he was to feed, clothe, and provide health care for.

For example, the Clinton administration estimated in the year 2000 nearly \$2 billion of the Oil-for-Food assistance was diverted to build nine lavish palaces for Saddam Hussein and his Baath Party supporters, all of this while children went hungry and without medicines. The Congressional Research Service, Mr. Speaker, in April 2004 did an analysis of the various estimates to try to get a handle on the scale of the Iraqi sanctions cheating and the U.N. failure to stop them.

CRS notes said, "There are no authoritative figures for the value of illicit trade with Iraq. However, the most widely cited estimates come from a study released in May 2002 by the GAO. According to the GAO study, Iraq earned \$6.6 billion in illicit revenue from oil smuggling and surcharges during 1997 to the year 2001. Of that total, GAO estimates that \$4.3 billion was from illicit oil sales and \$2.3 billion from surcharges on oil and commissions from its contracts to buy civilian goods (kickbacks). The study estimated that during 2001, Iraq earned \$1.5 billion from illicit oil sales from Jordan, Syria, Turkey, and the Persian Gulf; and about \$700 million from surcharges and contract kickbacks."

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, Congress and the Bush administration are actively investigating allegations of large-scale U.N. corruption in complicity with Iraqi sanctions violations. But we have not been allowed the access to information that would make these efforts successful. One problem, Mr. Speaker, with the U.N. program,

and I would underscore this, is that it seems that the firm which signed the contracts with the U.N. to inspect the humanitarian aid shipments, Cotecna, appears to not have had enough inspectors at their posts to make sure that the transactions were handled properly.

According to internal U.N. audits, Cotecna overcharged the U.N. while understaffing the inspection positions. In other words, part-time work for full-time pay. This particular allegation was included in a report written by auditors from the Office of Internal Oversight at the U.N. This report, we are now told, is one of 55 that the U.N. auditors did on the Oil-for-Food program. Amazingly and shamefully, all 55 audits were kept from the U.N. membership, including the United States mission. This is just plain wrong; and to the best of my knowledge, no one in the Congress has seen the other 54 reports.

At the very least, these reports should be released immediately by the United Nations to the U.S. and other interested governments, and this stonewalling must end. I would point out to my colleagues that the distinguished chairman of the House Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), wrote to Secretary General Annan: "The U.S. Congress, which provides 22 percent of the U.N.'s budget and which has publicly requested copies of the 55 internal audits, should not be required to depend on media leaks for source documents."

The report on Cotecna, I would point out, was leaked and was placed on the Internet. If it were not for the bravery of one unnamed official, we would not even have this one report.

Mr. Speaker, let me just conclude by noting that while the United Nations looked the other way, or worse was complicit and corrupt, Saddam Hussein was underselling his oil in return for kickbacks and providing commercial favors to the companies from countries which did his bidding in his ongoing propaganda war against the United States. The scheme was rotten to the core. In my mind, it also raises some very serious questions about two of our Security Council countries which most adamantly opposed the U.S. multinational coalition military commitment, and they were France and Russia. They were among those getting the greatest sweetheart deals during the Oil-for-Food situation.

For example, the Russia diplomatic representatives, we are told, were instructed to do everything they could to push for contracts with Russian companies. There are hundreds of Russian companies dealing in Iraq. Some were even front companies for Iraqi officials steering the proceeds into offshore bank accounts. Some companies took open bribes. One Russian company, Lakia, paid bribes to Iraqi officials to get their contracts through; but when the contract fell apart, Lakia asked for